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ABSTRACT

This guide is the fifth in a series of guidelines designed to be a framework for positive action at the school site and in the classroom through the High Schools That Work (HSTW) program, an effort to raise the achievement of career-bound students. It explains how to develop an educational and career guidance program that will help all students complete challenging programs of study. The role of educational/career programs in the HSTW model and the need for schools to shift from an ability model to an effort model are discussed; in addition, the importance of developing a planned program of study and addressing the inadequacies of existing guidance programs are emphasized. The following principles for redefining guidance are examined: guidance is a program, guidance is more than a counselor, guidance programs help students make key decisions, and career and educational planning is a partnership. Considerations in developing the following guidance system components are discussed: guidance curriculum, parent support, individual planning, teachers as advisors, and responsive services. The following steps in implementing an improved guidance program are detailed: organize a team to plan for change, select performance indicators, and determine the guidance program's current status. Sample materials and descriptions of exemplary practices are included throughout the guide. (MN)

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ED 381 697

HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK

SITE DEVELOPMENT GUIDE #5

GUIDANCE

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Involving Teachers, Parents, and the Community in Guiding All Students into a Challenging Program of Study

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"When kids come into high school, they need to be asked what they want to be and do. Teachers and counselors should help them get on the right track, guide them, and give them courses that will help them become what they want to be and do."

Student
Martin County High School
Stuart, Florida

The *High Schools That Work* program calls for comprehensive school change. Words such as "revise," "eliminate," and "require" in the Key Practices (see page 2) spell change for teachers, administrators, students, parents, and the business community. But what do these words mean to the school guidance program?

The purpose of this publication is to help high schools develop an educational and career guidance program that will assist all students in completing a challenging program of study. Such a program is vital to achieving the *HSTW* goals and key practices for a number of reasons:

- The increasing need for strong links between education and employment;
- The rising rates of youth unemployment;
- The growing demand for employees who can receive and process information, use mathematics to solve complex worksite tasks, and commit emotionally to productive work;
- The failure of large numbers of youth to master school-to-work transition.

High schools need a guidance program that enables each student to find a "rainbow of hope." Too often, the high school counselor is the sole provider of direct career and educational guidance. As a result, many youth do not receive the attention and assistance they need.

The changing workplace is affecting the demands on school counselors and guidance programs to help students prepare for the transition from school to work. Counselors are becoming managers of guidance programs that connect the needs of all students to resources at school, at home, and in the community. Teachers, parents, and employers are participating in the programs.

Shifting from Ability to Effort

The *HSTW* program recommends that schools shift from an ability model to an effort model. This has major implications for organizing and managing a guidance program:

In an ability model, teachers and counselors believe that certain students are the only ones who can perform complex tasks. Different standards exist for different students. Students in general and voca-

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SREB-STATE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CONSORTIUM
HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK PROGRAM

Goals

- To increase the mathematics, science, and communication achievement and the application of learning for career-bound students to the national average of all students.
- To integrate the essential content of traditional college preparatory studies—math, science, and language arts—with vocational and technical studies, by creating conditions that support school leaders and teachers in carrying out certain key practices.

Key Practices

- Setting higher expectations and getting career-bound students to meet them;
- Increasing access to challenging vocational studies, with a major emphasis on using high-level math, science, language arts, and problem-solving competencies in the context of modern business and technical studies;
- Increasing access to academic studies that teach the essential concepts from the college preparatory curriculum through functional and applied strategies that enable students to see the relationship between course content and future roles they may envision for themselves;
- Having students complete a challenging and related program of study, including three courses in mathematics and three in science, with at least two credits in each course equivalent in content to courses offered in the college preparatory program, and having students complete at least four courses in a vocational major and two courses in related areas;
- Having an organizational structure and schedule that enable academic and vocational teachers to have the time to plan and deliver an integrated curriculum aimed at teaching high-status academic and technical content;
- Having each student actively engaged in the learning process;
- Involving each student and his/her parent in an individualized advisement system aimed at ensuring that each student completes an accelerated and coherent program of academic study with a vocational or academic major;
- Providing a structured system of extra help to enable career-bound students to complete successfully an accelerated program of study that includes high-level academic content and a major;
- Using student assessment and program evaluation information to check and improve the curriculum, instruction, school climate, organization, and management.
- Providing career-bound students access to a structured system of work-based learning that is planned in collaboration with high-status school-based learning—high school and postsecondary—and that results in an industry-recognized credential and employment in a career pathway.

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tional programs of study are continually enrolled in low-level English, math, and science courses. The longer these students stay in school, the farther behind they get. The role of the counselor in an ability model is to decide which students get high-status courses with high standards and challenging assignments and which ones get low-status courses with low standards and dull, repetitive assignments.

In an effort model, teachers and counselors believe that most students can reach high standards through learning experiences that require hard work. The role of guidance in an effort model is to help each student develop and pursue a rigorous program of study for reaching a broad goal. Counselors and teachers work together to help each student understand that high performance counts, whether a student's next step is employment, further education, or both.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A PLANNED PROGRAM OF STUDY

The *HSTW* goals and key practices assist high schools in shifting from a smorgasbord approach to course selection to one that requires each student to finish a structured, focused, and upgraded program of study. In a smorgasbord approach, high performance counts only for students planning to enter *prestigious* four-year colleges. Those students complete a demanding program of study that requires them to exert extra effort. Many other students focus on the minimum graduation requirements and network among themselves to identify teachers and courses that require the least amount of effort to earn a diploma. Most high schools offer a wide range of low-level courses that make it simple for students to choose the easy courses. The role of guidance in a smorgasbord approach is to make sure students have the credits to graduate. In this approach, students receive little help in planning a program of study that prepares them to achieve a goal other than a diploma.

Under the structured approach advocated by *HSTW*, all students complete an upgraded academic core and either an academic or technical major. The *HSTW* program is not about tracking students into dead-end options. It is about helping students 1) select a challenging program of study; 2) connect high school studies with post-high school goals; 3) receive needed extra help to meet higher stan-

SREB RECOMMENDED CURRICULUM FOR CAREER-BOUND STUDENTS

The centerpiece of the Southern Regional Education Board *High Schools That Work* program is a curriculum for career-bound[1] students that blends the essential content of college prep math, science, and language arts with modern vocational studies in grades 9 through 12.

The curriculum calls for:

- ❑ At least four English credits in courses with content equal to that of college prep English.
- ❑ At least three credits each in math and science, with two credits in each subject from courses with content equal to that of college prep math and science courses. The program of study should include science in the 11th or 12th grade and math in the senior year.
- ❑ At least four credits in a vocational major with a sequence of related specialty courses.
- ❑ At least two credits in related vocational or technical fields, including one-half credit in a basic computer course.

In addition to completing an upgraded academic core, students major in either a technical or an academic field of study. By requiring students to earn four credits in a major from a core of electives, high schools are able to hold students to higher intellectual and technical standards in those courses.

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[1] Career-bound students are high school students who plan to work, attend a two-year community college or vocational-technical school, participate in an apprenticeship program, or enter the military after high school graduation. Career-bound students are not planning to enter a four-year college or university, but may at some future time.

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dards; and 4) broaden their views of possibilities and requirements of the future. Southern Regional Education Board data from *HSTW* sites reveal that career-bound youth can achieve at a higher level if they are encouraged to complete a challenging program of study. These youth must experience structure and rigor if they are to believe that high school performance means something in their lives.

The Role of Guidance

Guidance services in *HSTW* open windows of opportunity for all students and have all students pursue an accelerated program of study that prepares them for the workplace and further study.

The role of guidance is to help students identify: 1) their career interests and aptitudes; 2) their educational and career opportunities; and 3) ways to make decisions based on a reasoned process. Students need assistance in selecting curricular, noncurricular, and non-high school experiences that demonstrate the need for mastering complex academic and technical content. They also need help in choosing an area of concentration for grades 11 and 12 and beyond.

The guidance system in most high schools does little to help career-bound students select challenging courses in a four-year program of study designed to promote success in future education and career pursuits. Most of these students make their own decisions about course selection—unaided by the school or home—only to awaken at the end of high school realizing they have not prepared for further study or a career. Data from beginning *HSTW* sites reveal that career-bound students receive little personal attention from parents and education professionals in deciding which courses to take.

THE STATUS OF GUIDANCE ACTIVITIES AT *HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK* SITES

An effective guidance program helps students see the connection between high school studies and post-high school plans and the importance of hard work and high performance. In conjunction with the 1993 *HSTW* assessment of reading, math, and science, career-bound seniors at over 125 *HSTW* sites reported on the level of assistance they received in choosing courses, planning a program of study, and making post-high school plans. Most of these students said they received little help from their schools in obtaining information about themselves and their career and educational opportunities.

- Over 52 percent of high school vocational seniors reported receiving no help from counselors or teachers in developing a four-year program of study;
- Only 18 percent reported that their parents met with them and a counselor or teacher to plan a program of study;
- 46 percent of students who received assistance said they received it before or during grade 9;
- 19 percent reported receiving no help in course selection while in high school;
- 28 percent reported that they were dissatisfied with the help they received in course selection in high school;
- 38 percent reported the need for more information and guidance about high school studies and post-high school plans;
- 49 percent said they needed more help in finding employment after graduation;
- 35 percent said they needed more encouragement to take a combination of academic and vocational courses while in high school;
- 70 percent reported that they were employed during their senior year in high school, yet only 40 percent reported working in a job related to their high school vocational studies. Most high schools make no effort to help students link their work experience with their high school studies.

These data suggest that much needs to be done to devise a guidance program that involves teachers, counselors, parents, and community resource persons in a joint effort.

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High schools need to develop systems of home-school collaboration in which parents become partners in the education of their children. In the *HSTW* guidance framework, each eighth or ninth grade student completes a four- or six-year program of study plan in conjunction with a teacher or counselor and the student's parents. Students, parents, and professional staff members review the plan annually and make revisions if the students' goals change.

Often, the high school curriculum and guidance program are geared to accommodate rather than guide and instruct career-bound students. SREB data show that many career-bound students never receive course-selection assistance. When they do, they are often steered into low-level English, math, and science courses. One high school counselor said, "Our aim is to work with teachers to help career-bound students find the level of least resistance in finishing high school." As a consequence, SREB data reveal that career-bound students who receive course advice from counselors at many high schools have math and science achievement below that of students who make decisions without a counselor. The exception is high schools that have taken significant steps to enroll more students into an accelerated program of study. In the 1993 *HSTW* Student Assessment, students at seven improving *HSTW* sites who received advice from a counselor about math and science courses scored significantly higher in most instances than students who received advice from a parent, academic teacher, or friend. However, students at new *HSTW* sites who received course selection assistance from a counselor had significantly lower scores than students who consulted a parent, academic teacher, or friend (see Table 1).

The *HSTW* goals and key practices shift the focus from accommodation to acceleration. *HSTW* asks schools to set high standards for all students and provide extra time and help beyond the normal school day, week, or year. In this new context, the role of the counselor and the guidance program is to nudge students into an uncomfortable niche, stretch them to reach new heights of achievement, and provide assistance as needed.

The guidance system at many high schools allows students to schedule themselves into "warehouse" courses created to fulfill minimum high

Table 1

COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' MATH AND SCIENCE PERFORMANCE AT NEW AND IMPROVING *HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK* SITES BASED ON WHO ENCOURAGED STUDENTS' SELECTION OF MATH AND SCIENCE COURSES

1993 *HSTW* Student Assessment

	Math Scores		Science Scores	
	Improving *HSTW* Sites	New *HSTW* Sites	Improving *HSTW* Sites	New *HSTW* Sites
Counselors	293.3 (0.6) *	277.3 (0.2)	274.2 (0.6) *	247.3 (0.7)
Parents	295.5 (0.6)	278.7 (0.4) *	274.4 (2.1)	252.1 (0.5) *
Academic Teachers	283.8 (1.3) *	279.6 (0.4) *	266.9 (1.5) *	251.8 (0.8) *
Friends	290.5 (0.5) *	286.7 (0.3) *	281.4 (3.4)	260.9 (2.2) *

* The numbers in parentheses represent the standard error, a function of the size of the sample and the variability of scores within the sample. The range of scores obtained by adding and subtracting two standard errors to a mean or average score—referred to as the confidence interval—allows one to be 95 percent sure that the mean score for each group falls somewhere within that range. If the confidence intervals of two mean scores overlap, the scores are not significantly different.

CURRENT TEACHER INVOLVEMENT IN GUIDANCE PROGRAMS

In most high schools, the guidance program operates independently of teachers. The *High Schools That Work* goals and key practices call for teachers and counselors to work together. Each teacher understands and becomes a part of the goals and activities of the guidance program. The aim is to create a community of educators—English, math, science, social studies, and vocational teachers and counselors—collaborating to help students achieve at a higher level. The emphasis is on an interdisciplinary curriculum that connects academics to students' career goals. The strengthening of academic requirements puts pressure on counselors and teachers to get all students to make the effort to meet high performance standards.

A survey of 5,418 academic and vocational teachers at *HSTW* sites in the spring of 1993 revealed that teachers spend little time in educational and career guidance activities:

- Fewer than 18 percent of teachers report spending at least three hours a year with students and parents to develop and annually revise a four-year program of study.
- Over 46 percent of academic and vocational teachers report spending less than three hours a year to help students in their classes see a relationship between subject matter and possible careers.
- Over 69 percent of teachers report spending less than three hours a year providing information or advising students about job or educational placement beyond high school.

school graduation requirements. In the *HSTW* program, the aim is to enroll students in a coherent sequence of high-level academic and technical courses related to students' major areas of career and educational interest. For example, students pursuing a technology major would take a coherent science sequence including a physical science, a lab-based physics course such as Principles of Technology, and a chemistry course. These courses are challenging, but students can succeed if the school supports them in meeting the challenge.

The *HSTW* program emphasizes the value of every student. Schools must communicate that all students are important and that performance counts in preparing for the future. The *HSTW* goals and key practices urge schools to reinforce worth and dignity by providing a curriculum that holds all students to high standards. Students who complete a challenging program of study increase in self-esteem and self-concept. Research shows that individuals gain confidence when they are faced with challenges and given adequate support to meet and conquer those challenges. Growth becomes a self-sustaining process that results in even higher goals and expectations.

ADDRESSING INADEQUACIES OF EXISTING GUIDANCE PROGRAMS

Parents, teachers, administrators, and students view quality career and educational guidance as an essential function of the American high school. However, major inadequacies remain in providing guidance programs that support all students in educational and career goal setting and in high performance.

A study by the College Entrance Examination Board in 1984 concluded that there was insufficient career and educational guidance and counseling to help all students complete a program of study preparing them for further study and a career. Using *High School and Beyond* data, Lee and Ekstrom (1987) found that students from lower socio-economic status families were less likely than other students to have access to guidance counseling for planning their high school programs of study. These students were disproportionately placed in low-level English, math, and science courses and earned fewer math and science credits than college prep students. SREB has consistently found weaker programs of

career and educational guidance at high schools where career-bound students have low reading, math, and science achievement.

In a survey conducted by the Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education, students who received state scholarships for high academic achievement expressed a need for their schools to provide more timely and complete information on career and education opportunities. The views of one student reflect the comments of others:

> *We need a better guidance system. Because our counselor is forced to deal with students' personal problems, our educational and career counseling needs are neglected.*

A 1993 Gallup survey revealed that 60 percent of U.S. adults do not think public high schools in their communities devote enough attention to helping career-bound students develop the skills they need to find jobs after graduation. In the same survey, more than 72 percent of working adults said they would try to get more information about their career options if they could start all over again.

Counselors and teachers in grades 7 through 14 face a challenge to engage all students in investigating various career fields to see how the knowledge they gain in high school is used in adult employment. All educators, including academic and vocational teachers and school counselors, are responsible for helping students prepare for the future.

In interviews with several hundred students over the past six years, SREB has heard a constant complaint that no one at school tells them how to connect what they are asked to learn in school with what they will need to know on the job. Students need better reasons for taking courses than, "We

EFFECTIVE GUIDANCE PROGRAMS HELP SCHOOLS ACHIEVE THE *HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK* GOALS

The 1993 *High Schools That Work* Student Assessment measured the reading, math, and science achievement of over 8,000 students completing vocational majors at 124 high schools in 19 states. The assessment also gathered the perceptions of those students about their high school experiences, including the level of guidance support for course selection and educational and career planning activities. SREB found that:

- Significantly more students at high-achieving sites reported receiving course selection assistance that enabled them to complete the *HSTW* upgraded academic core and a major;
- More students at improving sites reported that teachers and counselors encouraged them to take more higher-level math and science credits;
- Significantly more students at high-achieving high schools reported post-high school educational plans;
- More students at high-achieving sites reported that a counselor or teacher helped them develop a four-year program of study;
- Fewer students at high-achieving sites reported needing more encouragement and advice to take the right combination of challenging academic and vocational courses;
- More students at high-achieving sites reported that their academic and technical courses were challenging;
- More students at high-achieving sites received advice and followed through on taking a high-level math or science course in senior year;
- Fewer students at high-achieving sites reported the need for assistance in selecting courses, obtaining information on post-high school studies, and finding a job.

Students from all socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds perform better in high school when they are advised early and often to pursue a challenging program of academic and occupational studies. If parents are involved in the process, the achievement of all students is higher.

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want you to take this," or "You need this to get into college."

All students—career-bound as well as college prep—need to continue their education beyond high school. Students previously labeled "general" and "vocational" need access to high-level academic courses to prepare to meet the standards of a global economy. By the same token, college-bound students can acquire a better understanding of the workplace through *quality technical studies.* A recent college prep graduate expressed frustration with the system:

> *All my science courses were theory. I never saw how things really worked. I would have learned more about a concept if I could have seen the theory in action. Also, no one told me that I could combine a college prep program of study with a vocational major related to my engineering interests. I missed a big opportunity to take drafting and electronics, both of which would have added meaning to my math and science studies.*

Re-examining Beliefs

High schools need to re-examine some of the beliefs on which the current guidance system is based:

- The first belief is that a vocational major in high school is incompatible with a college prep program. It is not necessarily true that vocational studies close the option for college. In fact, some students manage to do both. In such European countries as Sweden and Denmark, the vocational programs are high quality. Students have to perform at a high level in order to be accepted into a program. As a result, 90 percent of students in vocational majors in those countries complete the equivalent of our basic college prep program of study.
- The second belief is that students in the eighth grade are too young and inexperienced to choose a career major. Americans and Europeans agree on this, but that is where the similarity ends. American high schools do little to help young students and their parents acquire a base of knowledge and experiences for making career and educational decisions. Guidance activities begin early in European countries, with highly developed programs of education and career information. European educators build activities into the curriculum that expose students to various career pathways. In grades 8, 9, and 10 in Sweden and Denmark, students spend at least one week per year in the workplace. Teachers meet frequently with parents to discuss students' interests and aptitudes, and students have a "home teacher" who provides career information and guidance throughout high school. By the end of the 10th or 11th grade in European schools, students are enrolled in either a university-bound program, a vocational program, or a combination of both. There is no general track.

The guidance system in U.S. high schools relies too much on sorting certain students into unchallenging courses that provide neither academic nor career competencies; consequently, too many American students are "written off."

PRINCIPLES FOR REDEFINING GUIDANCE

Four principles will assist schools in developing a guidance program that supports the *HSTW* key practices:

1. Guidance Is A Program

Guidance is a program designed to help all youth make informed decisions about a program of study that prepares them for continued learning at work and in an educational setting. This goal can be achieved through an enriched curriculum and a guidance process that enables students to 1) discover connections between school learning and adult work; 2) gain insight about their own interests, aptitudes, and learning styles; 3) reflect on possible education and career options; 4) mix academic and occupational studies to open rather than foreclose options; and 5) choose and succeed in an accelerated curriculum aimed at preparing them for the 21st century.

The answers to a dozen key questions will help schools measure the extent to which guidance objectives are being met:

- What percent of the senior class will complete either a college prep program or an upgraded

academic core and vocational major as defined by *HSTW*?

- What percent of last year's graduates who enrolled in postsecondary studies had to take one or more remedial or developmental courses?
- What percent of seniors see their courses as challenging and nonrepetitive?
- What percent of seniors report that a counselor or teacher helped them plan a four- to six-year program of study by the end of grade 9?
- What percent of seniors report that their parents met with a counselor or teacher annually to review their program of study?
- What percent of seniors report satisfaction with the information and assistance they received in planning postsecondary studies?
- What percent of last year's graduates believe the assistance they received in finding employment was about right?
- What percent of last year's career-bound graduates believe the information and counseling they received on career and educational opportunities was about right?
- What percent of last year's career-bound graduates think the assistance they received in scheduling academic and vocational courses was about right?
- What percent of career-bound seniors who work have a job related to their vocational studies?
- What percent of career-bound seniors who work have plans to remain with the same company after high school?
- What percent of teachers assist parents and students in developing and revising a program of study?

2. Guidance is More Than a Counselor

The notion that guidance is the sole responsibility of the counselor is a barrier in integrating guidance activities into the curriculum and involving every teacher as an advisor. All teachers need to understand that career and educational guidance activities are more effective when they are an active part of the program. Often, teachers will not allot class time for guidance activities because they do not understand how the activities can help students see meaning and purpose in their studies. Teacher involvement is necessary in building students' capability to make career and educational decisions.

The New Castle County *High Schools That Work* site in Wilmington, Delaware, gives academic and vocational teachers mini-grants to create joint learning projects. Teachers work together to design projects that require students to use math, science, and communication skills in the context of their vocational majors. Such projects help students learn about themselves and the connections between academic and vocational studies. For example, one group of students produced a career-related trade magazine. An English teacher and a vocational teacher evaluated the magazine on writing proficiency and technical accuracy. Students gained understanding about the dynamics of teamwork, the need to communicate clearly, the effort required to complete a task, and opportunities to learn about technical writing careers in their fields.

Two questions will help school leaders decide if guidance is a real program:

- Does guidance at your school involve all teachers, or is it limited to what only counselors can do?
- If the counselor is away from school, do guidance activities still take place?

If the answer to these questions is no, your school does not have a guidance program that delivers the experiences all students need in making good decisions. Teacher advisors, mentors, community helpers, and integrated learning are ways to improve a school guidance program.

3. A Guidance Program Helps Students Make Key Decisions

Students face a number of key decisions in high school, including what to do after graduation and what program of study to follow in preparing for employment and/or postsecondary education. The *HSTW* program requires students to choose an upgraded academic core with a college prep or technical major or both. Some students enter high school with firm goals that they know exactly how to

achieve. Others do not have a clue about what to do beyond high school. These students often select courses based on what their parents remember about high school or on information from friends. Such informal or peer guidance activities often result in student schedule changes, confusion, and frustration. As a consequence, students take easy courses that fail to prepare them for postsecondary education or the workplace.

As a basis for making wise decisions, students and their parents need to be familiar with a range of educational (high school through postsecondary) and employment options. For example, students in 9th and 10th grades need "job shadowing" and other experiences in a variety of work environments that will allow them to discover their interests and aptitudes—and the subjects in which they need help. A guidance program can provide information and experiences to help parents, teachers, and students become proactive toward achievement of long-term goals.

4. Career and Educational Planning Is a Partnership

The process of planning a program of study is a partnership involving students, parents, and the school. The school initiates the process by offering every student an opportunity to engage in career exploration through the curriculum and the community. The information gained through these experiences becomes a major part of the annual planning conference involving parents, students, and the school.

Woodward High School in Woodward, Oklahoma, uses pre-enrollment planning conferences for eighth grade students and their parents as they develop four-year educational plans. Over 200 parents of eighth graders participated in 1992-93. According to one parent, the Woodward approach works because:

> *For the first time, the school is helping us do something positive. The school is focusing on what my child can do and what is possible—not on what my child cannot do based on some test.*

This approach educates parents about the need for an accelerated program of study and motivates students to focus on meeting higher standards. Students who report that their parents talk frequently with them about their high school study plans have higher achievement than students who do not receive such help (see Table 2).

Table 2

COMPARISON OF ACHIEVEMENT BY STUDENTS WHO DID AND DID NOT TALK FREQUENTLY WITH THEIR PARENTS ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL STUDY PLANS

1993 *HSTW* Student Assessment

	Reading Score	Math Score	Science Score
Talked with Parents a Great Deal	51.0 (0.1) *	282.4 (0.2) *	255.7 (0.5)
Did Not Talk with Parents	50.2 (0.1) *	278.1 (0.1) *	248.5 (0.3) *

* The numbers in parentheses represent the standard error, a function of the size of the sample and the variability of scores within the sample. The range of scores obtained by adding and subtracting two standard errors to a mean or average score—referred to as the confidence interval—allows one to be 95 percent sure that the mean score for each group falls somewhere within that range. If the confidence intervals of two mean scores overlap, the scores are not significantly different.

DEVELOPING THE IDEAL GUIDANCE SYSTEM FOR *HSTW*

To uphold the *HSTW* vision, a guidance program must support students as they work hard to achieve high standards; help students choose and complete a focused program of study; and involve teams of teachers and counselors working with students and parents to connect high school to the real world.

Guidance counselors at high-achieving *HSTW* sites are standard-bearers for early educational and career planning involving all students and their parents. Counselors at those schools are leading the way in helping students envision and prepare for success in employment and further study. In doing so, counselors work with a school-wide team to change curriculum and guide all students into challenging academic and occupational studies.

To improve education and career planning for high school students, a commission established by the College Entrance Examination Board (1984) urged high schools to:

- Establish a process to assess and meet the guidance and counseling needs of students;
- Under the principal's leadership, develop a guidance program that emphasizes the counselor as a "monitor and promoter of student potential," as well as a coordinator of the program;
- Inform and involve parents in the students' choices, plans, decisions, and learning activities;
- Improve services to students through collaboration with community agencies, colleges, businesses, and other community resources.

The commission emphasized that guidance must be part of the total educational program and receive support from the entire school and community. The counselor's job is to facilitate teachers and others in providing information and advice. These activities can be accomplished by developing the components of a comprehensive guidance program:

- Guidance curriculum;
- Parent support;
- Individual planning;
- Responsive services.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT COMPETENCIES NEEDED BY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Educational and Occupational Exploration

- Knowledge of the benefits of educational achievement to career opportunities;
- Understanding the relationship between work and learning;
- Skills to locate, understand, evaluate, and use career information;
- Understanding the need for positive attitudes toward work and learning;
- Skills to seek, obtain, maintain, and change jobs;
- Understanding how societal needs and functions influence the nature and structure of work.

Career Planning

- Skills to make decisions;
- Skills to interact positively with others;
- Understanding the interrelationship of life roles;
- Understanding the continuous changes in occupational roles.

Adapted from the National Occupational Coordinating Committee, Suite 156, 2100 M. Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, and *The Counselor's Role in Tech Prep*, Carl McDaniels, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0302.

Guidance Curriculum

A guidance curriculum begins with a team of teachers and counselors who prepare a framework for integrating career-related activities and assignments into existing academic and vocational courses. The team draws on the experiences and insights of parents, business leaders, and academic and vocational teachers in identifying competencies and learning activities for the curriculum. The team also identifies the roles of school staff members, vocational center and community college faculty, parent volunteers, business leaders, and local business and industry employees in implementing the curriculum.

An initial step in designing a guidance curriculum is to decide what students need to know to make thoughtful decisions at key points in high school. Counselors and teachers should determine the information and experiences that enable students to relate their high school studies to career and educational goals, decide to work hard to master complex tasks, see how their interests and aptitudes relate to education and career options, and understand the qualities needed for success in education and the workplace.

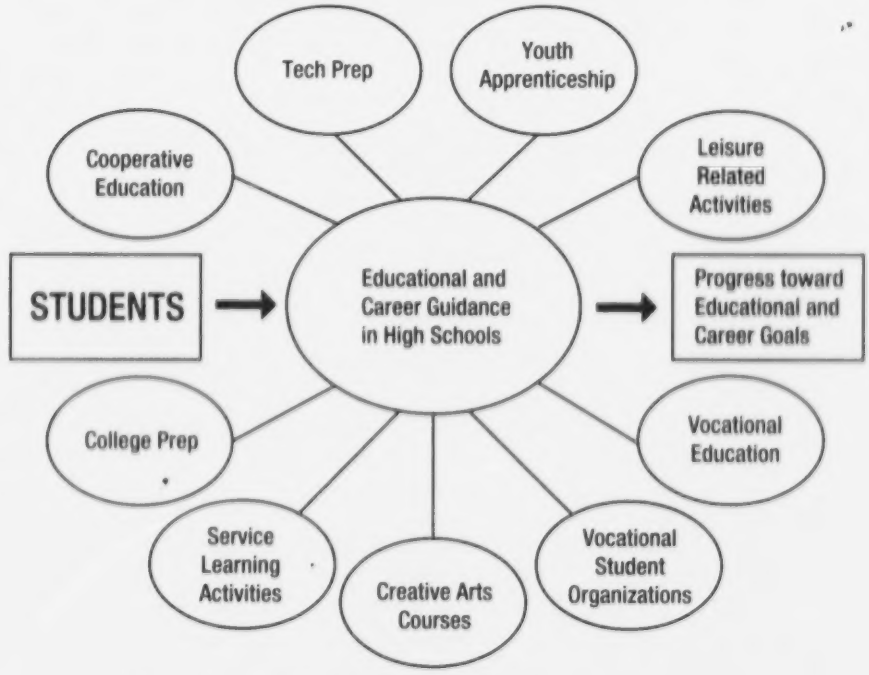
The next step in a guidance curriculum is for academic and vocational teachers to devise learning experiences to help students acquire the career development competencies necessary to make decisions about their high school studies. Many opportunities to promote career development competencies in academic and vocational classes have dual purposes: Students who complete a writing assignment relating interests, hobbies, and favorite school subjects to an occupational field are also developing their writing and research skills. Students who use math to solve problems that confront employees in a work setting are improving their capacity to use math in unfamiliar contexts.

A guidance curriculum must include specific activities at each grade level to help students make good decisions (see pages 14 and 15).

Parent Support

It is important for counselors to include parents in the guidance program. The primary goal of school and family partnerships is to improve student motivation, achievement, and success. Since parental

GUIDANCE FOR EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER OPTIONS IN HIGH SCHOOLS



Based on information from *The Counselor's Role in Tech Prep* (McDaniels, C. 1993).

participation decreases rapidly at each grade level, schools must pay special attention to parents to keep their interest and support.

- Parents and students at Buffalo High School in Oklahoma participate in evening sessions to update four-year plans. The Chamber of Commerce assists in the development of a career planning program for all students. Members of the business community act as mentors and advisors to help students explore career and educational options.

During the middle and high school grades, students need encouragement to meet challenges, persist in difficult situations, deal with failure as well as success, and understand the importance of hard work in school (Bempechat & Ginsburg, 1990). Families who receive useful information can help their sons and daughters cope with a variety of situations. Regardless of the parents' educational level, children of parents who attend school functions receive slightly higher grades in high school (Garet, 1988).

For parents to be partners with the school in helping prepare students for the future, the guidance program must involve large and small groups of parents in a number of ways:

- Communication to, from, and with parents—newsletters, report cards, parent-teacher conferences, telephone surveys, and notes to parents when their children have difficulty.
- Relationship-building activities—"good news" phone calls from teachers, open houses and social events, "happy-grams" to celebrate student success, and "exchange days" when a parent replaces a student in class on a normal school day.
- Planning sessions—advisory groups, joint teacher-parent-student planning (programs of study, career counseling, and problem-solving), workshops and seminars for parents to learn tutoring skills, and use of resource materials for homework and career planning.
- Service involvement—parents as volunteer career mentors with their own children and other students.

Individual Planning

An effective guidance process helps eighth and ninth grade students and their parents develop a tentative four- to six-year plan that prepares them for continued learning at work and in school. They develop tentative plans with an assigned counselor

STUDENTS AT FLORIDA SCHOOL HAVE SAME ADVISORS FOR FOUR YEARS

The guidance department at Apopka High School in Florida enlists the help of all teachers and administrators to provide career and educational guidance to over 2,500 students. Students are assigned to an advisor for their four-year high school tenure. As a result, teacher advisors become very familiar with the goals of students in their group. The system consists of:

- Matching students' career interests with advisors who are knowledgeable in the area.
- Having an advisor help each student outline a program of study to achieve a stated goal. Employers and postsecondary educators assisted the school in developing a curriculum guide that lists programs of study for career majors.
- Having students take an interest inventory in grade 10 and an Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery in grade 11. Test results are shared with students to help them affirm areas of interest and aptitude.
- Scheduling time for advisors to meet with students for 30 to 45 minutes once or twice a month. Counselors help advisors formulate a series of topics to discuss with students.
- Having seniors complete a "reality check" to ensure they are prepared for senior year and beyond.

SUGGESTED GUIDANCE CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES FOR GRADES 8-12

Grade 8

- Help students connect academic studies to career fields.
- Conduct an orientation unit on academic and technical majors in high school and beyond. The unit should emphasize the need for all students to complete accelerated academic studies and include ways to combine college prep and a technical major.
- Allow students to explore various technical and academic majors. Explain the options for pursuing in-depth study in a technical or academic field in high school and postsecondary education or at the worksite.
- Help students plan a preliminary six-year program of study involving four years of high school and two years at a postsecondary institution with work-based learning options.
- Help students link high school with a next-step goal beyond high school.
- Help students in grades 8 through 10 choose elective courses that are aligned with their interests: technology education, computer science, horticulture, introduction to health occupations, art, chorus, etc.

Grade 9

- Teach students in English classes to use educational resources and career information in the counselor's office, school library, career resource room, and the community. Ask them to use the information to prepare a paper on the career field they plan to enter, the educational preparation needed for that field, and why their chosen field is the right one for them.
- Prepare and conduct a teaching unit early in the school year on the connection between classroom performance, course credits, graduation, jobs, and college entry. Ask each teacher to emphasize that performance counts in work and further study. Devise learning experiences to help students see the connection between school performance and their goals for the future.
- Offer experiences in academic and vocational classes to help students connect what they learn in class with how the knowledge is used in a variety of occupational fields.
- Encourage students to collect newspaper and magazine articles on the relationship of what is being studied to success in a variety of career fields. The intent is to give students a grade for investigating school and career connections and sharing the information with the rest of the class. Have students in agriculture, home economics, business, and technology classes complete joint projects for English, math, science, and social studies. The projects should challenge students to do work outside of class.

Grade 9 or 10

- Assign students in English classes to write a paper on "How High School Fits into My Future." In helping them prepare to write their papers, ask students to list their hobbies, activities, and favorite school subjects. Give them an interest inventory, and have them compare the results to their lists. Have them identify questions about high school, including "What do I need to be a successful student?"
- Ask students to interview a variety of seniors enrolled in college prep, a vocational major, or general studies to find out what they would do differently if they could repeat high school.
- Have students interview high school graduates about what they are doing, what they would do differently if they could return to high school, and what advice they would give to current students. Ask students to share with the class what they learned in researching and writing the paper.

Grades 9 through 12

- Help students in all classes explore career fields through such opportunities as guest speakers, job shadowing experiences in business and industry, videotapes, and special projects.
- Help students understand the importance of out-of-school experiences that will shed light on their interests and abilities. Urge them to participate in volunteer activities for church, school, nursing homes, and the community.
- Ask students to think about adults they admire and would like to interview about the role of high school studies in a successful career and the advice they would give a student wanting to follow in their footsteps.

(continued on page 15)

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Grade 10

- Devise learning experiences to help students decide on a major for grades 11 and 12.
- Create an instructional unit in which students investigate a technical, academic, or fine arts major for in-depth study in grades 11 and 12. The investigation would result in a paper stating why a particular major is a good choice for the student.
- As part of the study, arrange for students to spend two days at a worksite to study a career field that interests them. Help students identify questions they want to ask. Have them share their findings with class members.
- Arrange for all students—college prep as well as career-bound—to visit the vocational classes of their choice. Students in those classes will serve as "tour guides" to answer questions. College prep students will benefit from examining the connection between professional careers and occupational programs of study. All students will begin to see the importance of integrated academic and occupational learning.
- Have students in history class prepare a report on the jobs and careers of at least three generations of their family. Ask them to identify the special skills those jobs required and how the jobs have changed over the years. Social studies teachers may want to find other ways to help students examine the evolution of certain occupations and the impact of geography, technology, politics, and the economy on careers.

Grade 11

- Help students in all classes examine several postsecondary education and work-based learning options for continued study in their technical major.
- Have career-bound students complete at least 40 hours of work-based learning in their major field during grade 11 and a work-based learning experience in their major field during the summer before grade 12.
- Require all 11th grade students to investigate career opportunities and postsecondary requirements for jobs. Have them use the counselor's office, career center, and library to do research for a special writing project.
- Present an interdisciplinary unit in English classes to help students find a summer work-based learning opportunity. The unit should include how to prepare a resume and a portfolio that depicts competencies in reading, math, communication, and technical areas.
- Have each student "role play" a job interview that is videotaped and critiqued by the student. The unit should reinforce the standards that products have to meet and potential employees have to demonstrate in interviews and presentations.
- Have students in math, science, and social studies classes complete a major project related to their technical and academic majors.
- In math, students can keep a diary of math concepts used in technical studies. They can complete a major math project requiring high-level math skills in the context of vocational studies.
- Science and vocational teachers can work together to assign a major science project requiring students to apply science concepts to their career fields.
- In social studies, students can examine the impact of government regulations on their fields of study, trace the historical aspects of a career, and determine the economic impact of a career on the community, state, or nation. The intent is to help students connect what they are studying in math, science, and social studies with their goals for the future and to encourage them to perform challenging tasks to advance their understanding of a career and their pride in the major they have chosen.

Grade 12

- Have students in vocational classes spend a day at the postsecondary school of their choice. Have them identify questions they want to ask: What happens to graduates who attend the school? How do employers perceive the curriculum? How much help are teachers willing to give? Have students share the information with others in the class.
- Arrange for students in vocational classes to spend 80 hours in structured work-based learning related to their technical major. Make sure a trained worksite mentor oversees the learning experience. Have each student work with a mentor to develop a worksite learning plan.
- In a joint project for English and a vocational class, help students update the resumes and portfolios they began in 11th grade. Have them use the projects to find a summer work-based learning opportunity in their technical field.
- Have students in math, science, and social studies complete a major project related to their vocational major similar to the one undertaken in grade 11.

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or teacher advisor who remains with the students throughout high school. The advisor meets annually with students and parents to prepare and revise the plan as needed.

The intent of this plan is to help each student find a challenging avenue through high school that combines high-level academic studies with concentrated study in a broad career or academic area of interest. The area of in-depth study will vary among students. Some students focus on an occupational or career field, while others study math, science, or foreign languages. The Swedish approach offers young people 16 educational options, including some that blend school-based and work-based learning.

Before launching a guidance system, high school leaders must define the various technical and academic majors available in high school. Leaders will want to draw from community and school resources. Work-based and postsecondary learning opportunities are particularly important to identify. In some instances, resources will come from community and technical colleges. The aim is to plan challenging sequences of academic courses linked to majors in academic or vocational/technical areas of study and then define the programs clearly in a handbook for students and parents.

Teachers as Advisors

Most high schools do not have enough counselors to provide each student and his or her parents with individual guidance. But individualized guidance is possible if each teacher, administrator, and counselor becomes a planning advisor. This approach works well at several SREB *HSTW* sites.

In these schools each teacher, counselor, and administrator is assigned a group of students. The advisor's role is to help students plan a program of study, monitor their progress, and advise them and their parents on school and career issues. Counselors train advisors to deliver information effectively to students and parents. For example, at Woodlawn High School in Louisiana, the school calendar contains time for advisors to provide students with career and educational information and help them and their parents fashion a program of study.

Several *HSTW* sites consist of an area vocational center working with one or more high schools. Counselors at the center work cooperatively with counselors and teachers at the high schools to help students develop four-year plans that include pursuing a major at the center. The counselor at Randolph County Vocational Center in West Virginia works closely with the high school counselor to make sure students attending the center take an accelerated sequence of math and science courses, including a high-level course during senior year.

The process of aiding students to develop a sound educational plan begins in middle school:

- Counselors at United Technical Center in Clarksburg, West Virginia, work closely with Washington Irving High School to provide youth in the middle grades with information about programs offered at the technical center. They arrange tours and work with high school counselors and teachers to help students take a sequence of academic courses in grades 9 and 10 that will prepare them for a major at the vocational center.

- The counselor at Apopka High School in Florida lays the groundwork in middle school for course selection and educational planning. During the third nine-week session of the eighth grade, students complete an interest inventory and a reading proficiency test. During the final nine weeks, eighth graders meet with the Apopka counselors to discuss the program of study guide and registration forms. Parents are invited to attend this session, and many do.

- At Pontotoc County High School in Mississippi, the counselor works with eighth grade students to develop a four-year plan. In the 1992-93 school year, 50 percent of students and parents participated in the planning effort.

At the initial planning meeting of the advisor, student, and parents, some schools give parents a folder of information on key decisions their son or daughter will have to make in high school and information they need to know to help guide them through a focused program of study. The state of Oklahoma has developed folders for parents that provide crucial information about the sequence of academic courses students should take if they want to blend a college prep program of study with a vocational major or take an upgraded academic core with

a more in-depth technical major. The folder contains descriptions of high-level academic courses students should complete.

Joint planning conferences involving the advisor, student, and parents occur each year throughout high school:

- Counselors at Fairdale High School in Kentucky report that students pay more attention to course selection related to a career major if parents are involved in a formal annual review of their children's plans. As a result, many more Fairdale students are taking four years of math and science. Students and their parents recognize that math and science are gate-opening courses for many career fields.
- All students at Muscle Shoals High School in Alabama attend at least one planning session yearly with a counselor or teacher to review past performance and future expectations. Counselors from the high school and the career center work with teachers to help students select courses and modify their four-year plans when necessary.
- St. Mary's County High School in Maryland annually sponsors a college fair to increase parent and community awareness about postsecondary education and training opportunities.

A planning process that reaches students before they enter high school and continues throughout can help students find a niche that will help them achieve their goals. SREB offers a suggested schedule for a planning process (see page 18).

Responsive Services

An effective guidance program links students to school and community services to help them successfully complete a challenging program of study. To achieve the *HSTW* goals, schools must provide students with extra help and time to achieve higher academic and technical standards and give them access to people and information about career and educational opportunities. Interested community leaders and business, professional, technical, craft, and other key workers are excellent sources of information about career fields.

Community Mentors

The school counselor, working with the guidance team, can develop a network of community mentors who devote time to helping youth learn about career opportunities and educational requirements.

- A Chamber of Commerce committee assists Rogers High School in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in identifying mentors to match the career interests of students. Mentors use an office at the high school during monthly two-hour visits with students. These adults help students understand the requirements for success in a number of career fields and the importance of working hard in high school.

Student Seminars

A series of seminars on school-to-work issues can help students see the connection between school and career goals and what they need to do to achieve them. Two to four one-hour seminars a year—conducted by business and community leaders, outstanding professional and technical workers, and representatives from postsecondary institutions—can help students gain the information they need for thoughtful career and educational plans. Possible seminar topics are:

- Qualities for Success in Postsecondary Education;
- Secrets to Entering and Advancing in a Job;
- Blending a Technical Major with a College Prep Program of Study;
- Getting into a Youth Apprenticeship Program;
- Get Smart by Working Hard;
- Competencies Employers Want in Prospective Employees.

Extra Help

As career-bound students enroll in high-level courses, many will need extra help and time to meet high standards. A system of extra help is an essential support service as the school develops a guidance program. Teachers can help counselors monitor progress and identify students needing assistance.

AGENDA OF RESPONSIVE SERVICES TO HELP STUDENTS MAKE KEY DECISIONS ABOUT EDUCATION AND CAREER GOALS

Grade 8

- ❑ Counselors review achievement information on eighth grade students and identify those needing to attend summer school to prepare for an accelerated program of study in ninth grade.

Grade 9

- ❑ Counselors work with teacher advisors at the end of each grading period to identify students failing one or more courses. Advisors meet with those students to develop a system of extra help that will enable them to pass their courses.
- ❑ Counselors conduct an after-school study skills course for students having difficulty meeting course standards.
- ❑ Counselors meet with students who are having difficulty, parents, and teacher advisors to enroll the students in structured, extended-day or extended-week programs.
- ❑ Counselors and advisors meet with students who are on the verge of failing at the end of the school year. They ask teachers to give the failing students an incomplete and to identify standards the students must meet to pass the course. Students receiving an incomplete attend summer school until they meet the standards.
- ❑ Counselors plan two to four seminars annually for students on school-to-work topics. The seminars are offered a number of times during one or two school days to give every student a chance to participate.

Grade 10

- ❑ Counselors administer interest and aptitude tests to all 10th graders.

Grade 11

- ❑ Counselors provide opportunities for students and parents to interact with employers and representatives of postsecondary institutions and the military. These meetings are for students who have a particular interest in work-based learning, career preparation in a postsecondary setting, or military service after graduation.

Grade 12

- ❑ Counselors arrange for students who plan to go to work after graduation to register with the local employment service.
- ❑ Counselors develop special materials for teachers to use in helping students develop an action plan for getting a job. This approach is most appropriate for students planning to work full time after graduation. Teachers encourage students to work closely with their vocational instructors to find employment related to their fields of study.

Note: Although most activities are appropriate for a certain grade level (as outlined above), a number of activities occur each year in grades 9 through 12.

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Counselors at Apopka High School in Florida identify students entering high school who will need extra help to master the standard English and math curriculum. These students can attend a special summer school program to prepare them for ninth grade. In addition, a counselor works with teachers to identify students who need special after-school tutoring to be successful in their studies. Teacher advisors and National Honor Society students serve as tutors. Largely because of these programs, the dropout rate at Apopka went from 9.67 percent in 1989 to 3.6 percent in 1992.

A supportive system of extra help includes:

- A system developed by counselors and teacher advisors to identify students needing extra help to meet higher standards;
- A system of extended-day, early-morning, and weekend tutoring;
- A process for involving the parents of failing students in deciding on a system of extra help;
- A requirement for students to attend summer school until they pass a course;
- A way to pay teachers for providing extra help.

HSTW sites are developing ways to assist career-bound students who need help:

- Buffalo, Fort Supply, and Woodward high schools in Oklahoma offer after-school and Saturday tutoring programs to help students pass high-level courses.
- Pontotoc High School in Mississippi uses retired teachers and current faculty to help students meet the challenges of high-level academic and technical studies.

In-depth Assessment and Counseling

Some students need more in-depth assessment and counseling in choosing a major. For special population students, the counselor can draw from the assessment centers available at many vocational schools and two-year institutions. The counselor can use analyses of students' strengths and other reports from the center to help students think about career and education options.

Work-based Learning

Counselors will want to work closely with vocational administrators and teachers to help students who want to enter a planned work-based learning program leading to employment credentials. Counselors and teacher advisors must know about these opportunities and be able to refer students to vocational educators who can help them prepare for work-based learning.

IMPLEMENTING AN IMPROVED GUIDANCE PROGRAM

A school can take three basic steps to make the guidance program effective:

1. Organize a Team to Plan for Change

The counselor's first step in creating a guidance program to support the *HSTW* goals is to form a Guidance Focus Team composed of parents, teachers, administrators, employers, and counselors from middle school and community or technical colleges (see Site Development Guide #2 on School Site Teams).

The team's primary function is to help create a guidance program that supports the *HSTW* goal of raising the achievement of career-bound students. The counselor orients the team to the *HSTW* goals and key practices and facilitates communication and understanding among school and community personnel who serve on the team. The team can:

- Assist in determining needs;
- Assist with planning and execution of chosen activities;
- Serve in a public relations capacity;
- Help establish a calendar of guidance activities;
- Provide resources for guidance activities.

The team will want to meet at least three times a year—more often while developing the guidance curriculum and teacher advisor system. Meetings are held during the school day, after school, or at night.

ALL STAFF MEMBERS AT RUSSELLVILLE (KENTUCKY) HIGH SCHOOL GUIDE STUDENTS TOWARD QUALITY EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER CHOICES

Everyone at Russellville High School in Kentucky—the principal, assistant principal, teachers, counselor, coaches, and youth service center staff—is involved in helping students make wise choices about their high school studies and the future. Each professional is responsible for guiding a group of 12-15 students through the maze of educational and career decisions confronting high school students. "We are able to have small groups because everyone on the staff leads a group," says Counselor Donna Wofford.

Russellville is a comprehensive high school with 430 students in grades 9 through 12—too many students for one counselor to serve alone. Thirty advisory groups contain a cross section of students representing every grade level, sex, race, grade point average, and socio-economic status. The mixture contributes to the success of the groups: Students share ideas and concerns, and seniors become peer advisors for younger students.

The groups meet for 40 minutes every other Monday in a period built into the schedule. Other classes on that day are shortened to make time for students and staff to meet. "The groups need to meet more often to accomplish the objectives we set for our school," Wofford says, "but we did not push for more time the first year. We believe the advisors will reach that conclusion on their own."

Mentoring Committee

Russellville began expanding its guidance program in the fall of 1992 by organizing a mentoring committee to evaluate and set direction for the program. The committee is composed of six teachers, two parents, one student, and the school guidance counselor, all of whom volunteered to serve. The group meets monthly to plan ahead and respond to immediate needs.

"Many guidance programs have separate objectives and activities for each grade level, rather than a sequence of activities designed to support students in the career decision making process," Wofford said. "We think specific objectives are essential in addressing an overall goal or vision." The mentoring committee developed five objectives for the first year:

- ❑ Develop trust;
- ❑ Emphasize positive student self-esteem;
- ❑ Create a caring school climate;
- ❑ Communicate the rationale behind changes students are experiencing in the classroom;
- ❑ Advise students regarding individual career plans.

Prior to the first meeting with students, the chairman of the mentoring committee—a teacher—met with the faculty to give them background on the program. The counselor discussed the dynamics of working in groups: arranging chairs in a circle, having the teacher participate as a member of the group, etc.

Other sessions were devoted to explaining changes taking place in the school and classroom. The school is eliminating the general track by removing all general math and general science courses. As a result, some students are failing. "We try to help students and teachers understand that setting higher expectations can be frustrating and painful in the beginning," Wofford said.

(continued on page 21)

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Individual Career/Transition Plan

A major objective of the program is to advise students regarding their individual career/transition plans. Each student receives a folder containing the results of an aptitude test, an interest survey, and a learning styles survey administered during a nine-week Career Choices class in eighth grade—as well as materials to help students, teachers, and parents understand the significance of the test and the surveys. The folder also contains the student's individual education and career plan initiated in the eighth grade.

The middle school and high school guidance counselors meet with eighth graders to fill out the individual plan and register them for freshmen classes. Parents meet with the high school counselor at an evening meeting to review the plans. Last year, six teachers spent two evenings talking with parents of eighth graders about these plans.

In February and March, faculty advisors meet with members of their group to review and update the individual career plan and discuss registration for the coming year. "We are looking at the possibility of having the advisors meet with the parents of each member of their group to review and update the individual career plan," Wofford said. "We hope to add a day and an evening for this specific purpose to next year's school calendar."

Getting Teachers to Buy Into the Program

Getting teachers to buy into an advisor program is a big hurdle, Wofford said. "Our strategy is to go slow and provide them with as much assistance as possible. We don't want them to see this program as added class preparation," she said. "About 85 percent of the teachers are doing a very good job, and we are confident that the others will participate fully in the future."

One benefit is to have six teachers on the mentoring committee. "They provided substantial support when we presented the idea to the entire faculty," Wofford said.

The counselor provides teachers with activities and materials for their small group sessions. The materials include copies of grade cards for students in the group, newspaper and magazine articles that relate to the objectives, and other supplementary information. One of the activities is to show a videotape of the NBC News special, "The Lost Generation," featuring Tom Brokaw. Another item is a column by syndicated newspaper columnist William Raspberry on the power of believing that all students can learn.

"I try to make the process so simple that if a teacher is absent, someone else can meet with that group," Wofford said. The superintendent and central office staff are encouraged to meet with students occasionally.

"We also provide a list of names, addresses, phone numbers, and birthdays of students," Wofford said. "It is suggested—but not mandatory—that each advisor contact students in the group about grades, attendance, birthdays, successes, disappointments, etc. We can't force teachers to build trust and bond with students in their groups. We can only suggest and hope that it will happen at this stage."

The Russellville counselor lists the keys to success in an advisory process: 1) Go slowly; 2) Provide a lot of direction and materials; 3) Involve teachers, parents, and students in the planning process; and 4) Evaluate the program constantly.

"An effective career advisory program that involves teachers as advisors will do more to change teacher attitudes toward career-bound students than any other single action a school can take," Wofford said.

Contact: Donna Wofford, Russellville High School, 1101 West Ninth Street, Russellville, KY 42276, (502) 726-8421

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2. Select Performance Indicators

The second step is to ask the team to select performance indicators for tracking progress of the guidance program and to benchmark those indicators to desired performance levels. SREB recommends these guidance indicators and benchmark goals:

- 90 percent of seniors should complete either an upgraded academic core with a technical major as defined by *HSTW*[2] or a college prep program of study. The college prep program is defined by requirements for admission to the major university in the state.
- 80 percent of students completing a *HSTW* upgraded academic core and technical major should be ready for postsecondary education without having to take non-credit remedial or developmental courses.
- 80 percent of students completing a *HSTW* upgraded academic core and technical major should view their courses as challenging.
- 95 percent of graduating seniors should report that by the end of the ninth grade they were assisted by a teacher or counselor in planning a four- to six-year program of study leading to employment and/or further study.
- 95 percent of students should report that their parents met annually with them and a counselor or teacher to help plan and update a program of study.
- 95 percent of graduating seniors should report satisfaction with the help they received in selecting courses for a program of study.
- 75 percent of career-bound students should believe the assistance they received in finding employment was about right.
- 90 percent of career-bound youth should report as seniors that the information and counseling they received was about right.
- 95 percent of career-bound youth should indicate as seniors that the guidance they received in taking the right combination of academic and vocational courses was about right.
- 75 percent of students working during senior year should report that their jobs related to their high school vocational studies and post-high school plans.
- 90 percent of teachers should report spending three to five hours a year helping students see the relationship between their subject area and possible career paths.
- 90 percent of teachers should report that they provided guidance and placement services in helping students move from high school to a job or postsecondary studies.

3. Determine the Current Status of the Guidance Program

After deciding on performance indicators and setting benchmark goals for each indicator, school leaders can use the indicators to determine the current status of the guidance program. *HSTW* sites receive four reports from SREB containing data related to the indicators:

- The *HSTW* assessment of student achievement in reading, mathematics, and science includes students' responses about the assistance they received in planning a program of study, the adequacy of that assistance, whether they had jobs while in high school, and whether that work related to their studies.
- The Teacher Survey yields information on whether teachers actively assist students in planning and completing a program of study and in moving from high school to the next step.
- A transcript analysis report indicates whether students completing vocational majors met the English, math, and science requirements in the *HSTW* recommended program of study.
- The Student Follow-up Survey tells what career-bound graduates are doing one year after high school. The report contains information on where students believe they needed more help.

[2] The *HSTW* program requires students to complete four credits in a vocational major and three credits each in math and science, including two each in high-status courses acceptable in a college preparatory program of study, and four credits in college preparatory English.

THE GUIDANCE PROGRAM AT MARTIN COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL IN FLORIDA INCREASES COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

Many *High Schools That Work* sites are trying to involve parents more actively as their sons and daughters plan and review their high school programs of study. The counselors at Martin County High School in Stuart, Florida, have devised a parent participation plan that greatly increases the level of communication between home and school.

Martin County High School is a comprehensive high school serving 1,750 students in grades 9-12. The guidance staff consists of five counselors, a JTPA counselor, and two secretaries.

The characteristics that make the Martin County High School guidance program successful are careful planning; detailed guidance information distributed to teachers, students, and parents; ongoing communication among teachers, counselors, parents, and students; large blocks of time for counselors to meet with parents and students; and support from the entire faculty.

The process begins when students are in the eighth grade. Counselors visit all feeder schools in May and meet individually at the high school with each eighth-grade student and interested parents.

When students are in ninth grade, parents attend two individual conferences with their children and a counselor: one in the fall and another in May. The purpose of the first conference is to formalize a four-year program of study and review the results of John Holland's Self Directed Search, which is administered to all freshmen. The second conference is for the purpose of reviewing and adjusting the plan based on the student's performance in those first few months of high school. During this conference, ninth grade students register for grade 10. Parents of 10th and 11th grade students meet annually with counselors to review the four-year plan and register for the coming year.

Beginning each January and continuing until June, the guidance staff reserves four hours each morning for individual 30-minute appointments with students and parents. Five counselors spend four weeks meeting with all students in each grade level and their parents.

"We send letters a few weeks ahead to invite the parents to participate in the appointments," Counselor Blanche Wells says. As a reminder, every teacher posts a schedule of appointments in the classroom. The schedule lists the day and time of an appointment and the counselor's name. To make sure the students do not forget their appointments, guidance department secretaries send daily reminders to students who are scheduled for appointments.

"Every student attends the appointment, and parents make an extra effort to be there, including taking time off from work. Since we began the program, our parent involvement has grown from 20 percent to 45 percent," Wells said. "We impress on our students that the school and their families care about them and want to see them succeed in high school, further education, and the workplace. As a result of this attention, a lot of students change their minds about their program of study and decide to take more challenging courses. We are fortunate to have a concerned faculty that pushes students toward higher academic achievement. Our teachers work very hard to make sure the quality of instruction and the level of student learning are maintained at a high level."

As a result of the program, counselors and teachers have developed closer bonds with the students' families. "Now that they know us better, they call us right away if their children have problems," Wells said. Parents also volunteer to be mentors to students and to make connections between school and the community.

"This program requires a lot of work and attention to detail, and it ties counselors up every morning for months, but it is worth it," Wells said. "We have one of the highest numbers of students qualifying for the Florida Scholars program, which is open to career-bound as well as college prep students."

Another strong indication of the program's effectiveness is that nearby junior colleges report that Martin County High School graduates enroll in fewer remedial courses than graduates from other feeder high schools. One reason is that Martin County High School counselors talk regularly with counselors at the junior colleges and can tell students what they need for success in postsecondary education.

Contact: Blanche Wells, Martin County High School, 2801 South Kanner Highway, Stuart, FL 34994, 407/287-0710, Ext. 464

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Subcommittees

Once the status of the guidance program is determined, the next step is to ask guidance team members to head four subcommittees:

- A Program of Study Planning subcommittee is composed of academic and vocational teachers and representatives of middle school, two-year postsecondary school, the area vocational center, and employers. This sub-committee creates a plan for meeting with all eighth graders and their parents to develop a six-year program of study for an upgraded academic core and a major, college prep, or both; to review the plan annually in terms of progress made; and to revise the plan as needed. The plan will call for counselors and teachers to use students' interests and aptitudes in planning a program of study.

- A Parent Education subcommittee—composed of parents, academic and vocational teachers, and representatives of the business sector—will develop a plan for educating parents about the revised guidance program and the upgraded program students are expected to complete. The plan will emphasize the rising requirements of the workplace and the need for students to take a more challenging and focused program of study that includes an upgraded academic core and a major. The plan should emphasize the need for all youth to continue their education beyond high school, either in a formal school-based and work-based learning program or in some form of post-high school study. The plan should also contain provisions for working with middle and junior high schools to educate parents on the need for students to pursue an accelerated high school program. The subcommittee will publish parent newsletters, arrange for open-house presentations, and involve business and community leaders in educating parents about the high school and the guidance program.

- A Curriculum subcommittee—composed of parents, teachers, and employers—will develop a guidance curriculum for grades 8 through 12. The plan will identify ways for counselors and teachers to improve the curriculum by adding learning experiences that help students see the connection between high school studies and post-high school plans. The plan will contain suggested topics, activities, materials, and resource people to assist in implementing the guidance curriculum. The intent of the curriculum is to provide youth with information about their interests and aptitudes, career possibilities, and educational opportunities beyond high school and to help them understand the relationship between high school performance and success in the job search and the workplace. The plan should include staff development to help teachers understand how to build guidance activities into the curriculum.

- A Counselors subcommittee—composed of counselors from the middle and junior high schools, the career center, and community or technical colleges—will meet at least monthly to:

  - Discuss students they have in common who need special attention;
  - Solve scheduling problems that prevent students from completing a vocational major;
  - Recommend ways to get students and parents to regard courses at the career center as high-status courses equivalent to college prep courses;
  - Devise counseling strategies to ensure that career center students take three years of college prep-level math and science related to their vocational majors;
  - Create study options at the career center beyond the normal school day for students with scheduling conflicts.

The counselor and the guidance team may want to publish a calendar for grades 8 through 12 to help teachers, students, and parents keep up with major guidance activities during the year. The calendar will list all activities to be conducted by teachers, counselors, and community resource persons in support of the guidance program.

The ultimate success of a guidance program is measured in student improvement and performance indicators. The guidance team should review information annually to see if the program results in desired changes. The desired changes include:

- More students completing either a *HSTW* upgraded academic core and a major or a college prep program of study;
- More students taking advanced math or science during the senior year;
- More career-bound students continuing their study in an organized school-based and work-based learning program or in some form of postsecondary education;
- More students (and their parents) receiving assistance in planning a program of study;
- More students satisfied with the guidance program and the information they received in selecting courses and planning their next step beyond high school;
- More teachers helping students see a connection between course subject matter and careers;
- More teachers advising students (and their parents) on course selection in high school and career and education steps beyond high school.

As counselors and guidance team members measure the progress of the guidance program, they will see which components are working well and which are not. Persistence and continuity are necessary to get teachers, counselors, parents, and community resources to work together to help all students gain a knowledge base for making wise decisions about their high school studies and post-high school plans. The guidance team can change the status quo and activate a guidance program that assists every student in finding purpose and focus in high school. The team can train teachers as advisors, enlist community mentors, and involve parents in making high school count for all students.

The process of change is seldom smooth or void of conflict. Change by its very nature can make people uncomfortable. The team should anticipate resistance from some teachers—and even from some counselors. The way to overcome resistance is to involve teachers in the development process and to conduct solid inservice activities to answer questions and concerns about the program.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHER ADVISORS

For teachers to become an integral part of a high school guidance program, they will need orientation and ongoing staff development. Counselors at *High Schools That Work* sites that have had the most success with comprehensive guidance programs that address the needs of all students offer these suggestions:

- ❑ **Meet with teachers as a group before launching a new guidance system that involves teachers as advisors. Explain the system, and answer any questions about the program.**
- ❑ **Provide background materials on working with students (and their parents) as they choose a career pathway and a program of study.**
- ❑ **Model—but do not dictate—the best techniques for working with a group of students on career interests and programs of study.**
- ❑ **Produce or obtain such career guidance materials as brochures, handbooks, and videotapes to assist students and teachers in identifying careers.**
- ❑ **Offer opportunities for teachers to participate in business tours, summer apprenticeships, and other workplace experiences to broaden their understanding of the workplace.**
- ❑ **Keep teachers informed of apprenticeships, job shadowing programs, and other opportunities for students to obtain workplace knowledge and experience.**

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE FOR HIGH SCHOOL PLANNING

Grade 8

Counselor: Conduct an orientation session for students and parents on high school and the guidance process. Provide information on recommended programs of study. Explain to parents the need for all students to take challenging courses and to select a major area of study by grade 11. Parents need to understand their role in helping students achieve.

Advisor: Conduct an initial planning session with students and parents to prepare a tentative program of study. The advisor reviews the student's interest inventory, educational progress, and potential high school studies; helps students select challenging courses in grade 9 to build on their strengths and address identified weaknesses; and helps students choose courses and experiences to aid in selecting a major in grades 11 and 12.

Grade 9

Advisor: Conduct a small group session to give students information about programs of study leading to a four-year college or university, two-year technical or community college, or work-based learning. The intent is to help all students connect high school studies with career options. Explain how certain academic and vocational courses can result in advanced credit in postsecondary education. Help students understand that they can earn college credit through advanced placement courses and that certain vocational courses will give them credit at community and technical colleges. Meet with students and parents to discuss progress in the ninth grade and to review the tentative four- to six-year plan. Assist students and parents in revising the plan based on new information and students' experiences in the first year of high school. The advisor makes sure students and parents understand how the high school transcript is kept and its importance to their future.

Grades 9-12

Advisor: Conduct informal discussions to allow groups of students in grades 9 through 12 to share information about high school studies and their connection to future study and employment. Invite recent graduates to compare their high school studies with what they are doing now. These sessions can help students link their studies with postsecondary education and career plans.

Advisor or counselor: Conduct a group meeting with students and parents to discuss interest and aptitude tests the students have taken. Ask students and parents to study the tests and come to the Individual Planning Session prepared to select a major for grades 11 and 12.

Grade 10

Advisor: Meet with students and parents to review and update the four- to six-year plan. The intent is to help students choose a major for grades 11 and 12: Options include a technical major; a major in an academic area such as physical science and math, humanities and history, foreign language and business, or fine arts; or a combined college prep and technical major. Students may study the major in high school, at an area vocational center, at the worksite through a work-based learning plan developed in cooperation with an employer and on-the-job mentor, or in a postsecondary setting.

Grades 11-12

Advisor: Meet with students as a group to provide information on scholarships, financial aid, and other resources to help them with study beyond high school.

Grade 11

Advisor: Review and update the four- to six-year plan with students and parents. Review the transcript to make sure the student is meeting all graduation requirements. The advisor should coordinate this session with the vocational center counselor to make sure the student plans to take appropriate math and science courses at the home high school during his or her senior year.

Grade 12

Advisor: Conduct individual sessions with students and parents to finalize the student's next step goal beyond high school and to plan actions for achieving it. The goal may be enrollment in a two-year or four-year college, an apprenticeship program, the military, or other options.

Meet with seniors several times during the year to nudge them to prepare for their post-high school goals. Some students may need to take exams or fill out applications for postsecondary institutions. Others may need to prepare a resume and contact potential employers. Still others may want to find a registered apprenticeship opportunity. Finally, some students may want to enter the military after graduation.

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WAYS FOR COUNSELORS TO SUPPORT AND PROMOTE EFFECTIVE GUIDANCE PROGRAMS

A major emphasis in the *High Schools That Work* program is the development of new partnerships between academic and vocational teachers, high school and postsecondary institutions, and educators and business/industry. Counselors can use their communication skills to make *HSTW* a successful initiative. They can support and promote partnerships in these ways:

- ❑ Counselors can work with instructional staff to infuse the curriculum with awareness activities and experiences.

  Counselors gain a global view of the school as they interact with parents, students, faculty, administration, and agencies. Counselors can use their knowledge and position to create partnerships in and outside of school.

- ❑ Counselors can help bridge the gap that often exists between academic and vocational teachers and enlist teachers as advisors in a comprehensive guidance program.

  Curriculum reform requires the integration of academic and vocational studies. In the past, schools did not encourage academic and vocational teachers to work together. The HSTW program opens up and creates new and better avenues for communication. Counselors, with a global view of the school, can bring greater understanding and increased interaction between academic and vocational faculty.

- ❑ Counselors can be a catalyst for a school environment in which students and staff are respected and valued for their contributions.

  While many young people face tremendous disadvantages as a result of rapidly changing social, economic, and family conditions that affect schools, a counselor cannot focus solely on external situations. What happens inside the school is important and can have a positive influence on students. Counselors can promote a school environment that empowers students and faculty and fosters teamwork and cooperation.

- ❑ To become aware of the skills young people need for employment, counselors can participate in partnerships between education and business/industry.

  Increasingly, business internships and continuing education courses are available to familiarize educators with the contemporary workplace. Counselors can take advantage of many opportunities and experiences in business settings.

- ❑ Counselors can provide business, industry, and community leaders with a deeper understanding of the issues facing educators and students.

  The rel ıtionship between educators and business, industry, and community leaders must be viewed as reciprocal. Employers can support High Schools That Work *goals by requiring transcripts with job applications to demonstrate that high school performance counts; allowing employees flex-time to attend parent-teacher conferences and to receive phone calls from school officials; providing work experiences for students; and establishing mentor programs.*

- ❑ Counselors can increase interaction and communication with their counterparts at postsecondary institutions.

  Counselors need a better understanding of the programs, services, and career opportunities provided by community and technical colleges. Counselors can see that students and their parents receive information on programs of study linking high school and postsecondary education with employment. Secondary and postsecondary counselors can develop their own partnerships by meeting regularly to discuss issues related to transitioning students.

- ❑ Counselors can participate in staff development activities.

  Counselors can join professional organizations, attend state and national conferences that address academic and vocational integration, and keep abreast of guidance-related issues.

Based on *Tech Prep and Counseling: A Resource Guide* (Chew, C. 1993) and *The Counselor's Role in Tech Prep* (McDaniels, C. 1993).

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For more information, contact Gene Bottoms, Director, *High Schools That Work*, Southern Regional Education Board, (404) 875-9211.

The High Schools That Work *program is the nation's largest and fastest growing effort to raise the achievement of career-bound students. Created by the Southern Regional Education Board-State Vocational Education Consortium, the program includes over 300 school and school system sites in 19 states.*

These guidelines are based on the Consortium's experience with High Schools That Work *sites during the first five years of the program. The guidelines are designed to be a framework for positive action at the school site and in the classroom.*

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